

REMARKS

This responds to the first Office Action. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-16, 19-22, and 25 are pending. Claims 1, 11, 14, 15, and 25 are the independent claims.

Allowable Claims

Claims 14 and 25 were deemed allowable by the Examiner. These claims have been written in independent form and are submitted to be in condition for allowance.

Rejected Claims

Independent Claim 1

Claim 1 has been amended to include subject matter of original claim 4, wherein the first and second connector interfaces are each defined to include laterally adjacent surfaces and axially adjacent surfaces that are arranged transverse to the laterally adjacent surfaces. For both the first and second seals, the first sealing element thereof is located between and sealingly engages the laterally adjacent surfaces, and the second sealing element thereof is located between and sealingly engages the axially adjacent surfaces.

The Lieb et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,634,910 (Lieb) does not disclose or fairly suggest such an arrangement, and expressly teaches away from same. It is noted that Lieb discloses use of an O-ring seals 39 in grooves 38 (see Fig. 3a). These O-ring seals seal in the radial direction only, i.e., only between the laterally adjacent surfaces of the male plug and female socket. This is explained, e.g., at col. 1, lines 55-56. With reference to Fig. 4 of Lieb, it can be seen that a seal 39 does not touch the inner transverse end wall of the socket and is physically prevented from doing so owing to its placement in the groove 38, i.e., the groove 38 prevents the seal 39 from sealing any axially adjacent surfaces of the plug/socket connection.

As such, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 and dependent claims 2, 3, 5-10, and 13 are now in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 11

Claim 11 has been written in independent form. Claim 11 defines the modular electrical device to include a module including first and second female sockets each comprising a wall defining a plurality of flow passages extending therethrough. The polymeric material from which the first and second seals are molded extends into the flow passages and through said wall in which the flow passages are defined so that said first and second seals are mechanically anchored to said flow passages of said first and second female-socket connectors, respectively. An example of this structure is shown in Figs. 17B & 17C of the present application.

The Examiner rejected claim 11 based upon Lieb in view of Werner U.S. Patent No. 5,795,173. It is noted, however, that Lieb relies solely on O-ring seals 39 located in grooves 38 (see Fig. 3a). The seals 39 are simply seated in the grooves 38 and *there is no portion of the seal material that extends through passages defined in walls etc. to anchor the seal as recited in claim 11.* In addition, it is noted that Lieb does not disclose installation of the seals 39 *in the female sockets 19* -- the seals 39 are located only on the male connector portion 37 **and Lieb expressly states that placement of seals in sockets (blind bores) is undesirable** (see Lieb, col. 1, lines 60-64). Nothing in Werner U.S. Patent No. 5,795,173 overcomes the deficiencies of Lieb.

As such, claim 11 is submitted to be in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim15

Amended claim 15 defines an electrical module comprising: a housing; first and second electrical connectors comprising respective first and second female sockets; and, first and second seals located in the first and second female sockets. The first and second seals each comprise first and second sealing lips that project outwardly in first and second directions that are transverse relative to each other. *In particular, the first sealing lip of each seal projects axially into the socket, and the second sealing lip of*

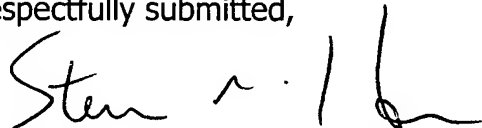
each seals projects radially into the socket in a transverse orientation relative to the first sealing lip.

Original claim 15 stands rejected based upon Lieb in view of Makita U.S. Patent No. 6,443,764. The Examiner acknowledges that Lieb does not disclose the recited seal structure, but points to Makita in support of the proposition that it would have been obvious to use such a seal in the Lieb device. As noted above, however, a main feature and explicit goal of Lieb is to provide a modular electrical device with **radial sealing only** (see Lieb, col. 1, lines 55-56). Also, **Lieb teaches directly away from placement of seals in the bottom of a blind recess (socket)** for axial sealing (see Lieb, col. 1, lines 60-63). Given the express disclosure of Lieb that teaches away from use of a two-way sealing element and that teaches away from any axial sealing element, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's proposed combination of Lieb and Makita is improper and one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine the disclosures thereof. As such, claim 15 and dependent claims 16, and 19-22 are also submitted to be in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

It is submitted that this application meets all statutory requirements. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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